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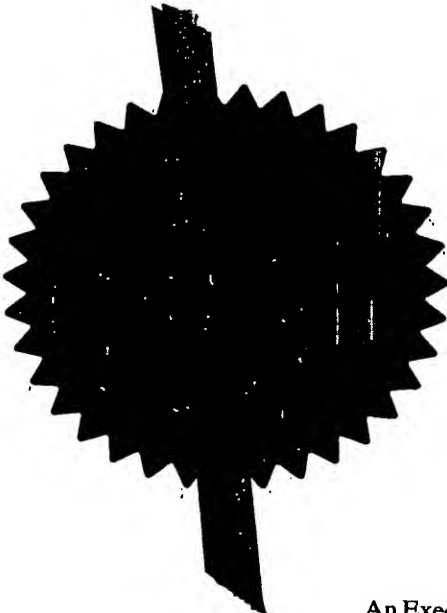
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 P01/7700 0.00-0222359.2

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3. of the or of
 (name all surnames)

0222359.2

Reckitt Benckiser (UK) Limited
 103-105 Bath Road
 Slough
 Berkshire
 SL1 3UH
 United Kingdom

Patents ADP number (if you know it)

07972136002

If the applicant is a corporate body, give the country/state of its incorporation

England

4 Title of the invention Odour Absorbing Articles

5. Name of your agent (if you have one) Elizabeth Anne Dickson

"Address for service" in the United Kingdom to which all correspondence should be sent (including the postcode)

Reckitt Benckiser plc
 Group Patents Department
 Dansom Lane
 Hull
 HU8 7DS
 United Kingdom

Patents ADP number (if you know it)

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Country	Priority application number (if you know it)	Date of filing (day / month / year)
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Signature

Date

Elizabeth Anne Dickson

26 September 2002

12. Name and daytime telephone number of
Person to contact in the United Kingdom

Elizabeth Anne Dickson (01482) 582909

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DUPLICATE

ODOUR ABSORBING ARTICLES

This invention relates to odour absorbing clothing covers and methods of removing or mitigating odours from clothes.

5

Through everyday use, unpleasant or unwanted odours may become absorbed by clothing. Odours from sweat and smoke absorbed by clothing are a common problem. In many instances an item of clothing will be worn by a person, during which time odours are absorbed, and after which the item of clothing will be stored without washing it to remove the odours. When the item of clothing is worn for a second or subsequent occasion, very often the unpleasant or unwanted absorbed odours can be detected by the wearer or other persons close by. Generally items of clothing are stored in close proximity to one another, permitting odours to be transferred from an odour-emitting item of clothing to adjoining items of clothing (which may be clean items of clothing). Clothes which are often stored without washing between uses, and which tend to have absorbed odours, include suits, coats and knitwear.

There are products on the market such as spray and aerosol compositions which may be sprayed onto clothing to mask unpleasant or unwanted odours before storing the clothing.

Such compositions only serve to hide the odours for a limited period of time and can themselves cause the clothing to take on an unwanted perfumed smell.

For footwear, products are known in the form of removable insoles, which include an odour absorbing substrate. When placed inside footwear, such insoles serve to absorb odours, as opposed to simply masking them.

It would be advantageous for a user to be able to remove unwanted or unpleasant odours from an item of clothing previously worn by the user, without the need to wash or
5 dry clean the item of clothing before further use of the item.

It is therefore an aim of preferred embodiments of the present invention to overcome or mitigate problems of the
10 prior art.

According to a first aspect of the invention there is provided an odour-absorbing clothes cover comprising an odour-absorbing sheet material, the sheet material
15 defining an enclosure arranged, in use, to receive an item of clothing, the enclosure comprising an opening formed in a surface of the enclosure, for passage of the item of clothing.

20 Suitably the sheet material is a non-woven sheet material, and is preferably a non-woven fibrous sheet material.

The sheet material is preferably a fibrous web or mat.

25 The sheet material is preferably an air permeable sheet material.

Suitable sheet materials include polyesters, polyamides, polyvinyl alcohols, cellulosics (for example rayon, viscose) and nylon, or mixtures thereof for example. The
30 sheet material may alternatively comprise natural fibres, such as cotton, linen, flax and wool, or mixtures thereof,

for example. The sheet material may comprise a mixture of synthetic and natural fibres.

Suitably the sheet material is comprised of synthetic
5 fibres formed into a web, mat or similar flexible sheet-
form substrate. The sheet material may be a laminar
composite material of layers of non-woven fibres, woven
fibres or mixtures thereof which layers may comprise the
same or different materials.

10

Preferred sheet materials comprise fibres of polyester or
cellulose, including viscose and rayon.

Odour absorbing materials may be selected according to the
15 intended use and odours to be absorbed, and include
activated carbon, zeolites, inorganic compounds such as
silica and metal oxides e.g. of titanium (TiO_2), zinc
(ZnO) and aluminium and mixtures thereof, and may be in
crystalline, microcrystalline, granular or other
20 particulate form, for example.

Most preferred as an odour absorbing material is activated
carbon, preferably in particulate form. The activated
carbon may take the form of charcoal, peat, coconut shell,
25 lignite or wood, for example but is preferably charcoal.

Particle sizes may depend on the material selected but
will typically be between about $0.1\mu\text{m}$ to about $300\mu\text{m}$,
preferably up to about $75\mu\text{m}$, and preferably not less than
30 $1\mu\text{m}$, more preferably not less than $25\mu\text{m}$, these values
being nominal (mean) diameters.

Suitably the odour-absorbing material is present in the sheet material in an amount of at least 5% (w/w), preferably at least 10% (w/w), more preferably at least 15% (w/w), still more preferably at least 20% (w/w), yet
5 more preferably at least 25% (w/w), and most preferably at least 30% (w/w), of the total weight of the sheet material.

Suitably the odour-absorbing material is present in the sheet material in an amount of no more than 60% (w/w),
10 preferably no more than 50% (w/w), more preferably no more than 45% (w/w), and most preferably no more than 40% (w/w), of the total weight of the sheet material.

Suitably the odour-absorbing material is retained or
15 impregnated within the sheet material, preferably using a fixing agent, and whereby in use shedding of the odour-absorbing material is inhibited, preferably substantially avoided.

20 Suitably the fixing agent comprises a binder, and preferably a film-forming agent. Suitable binders include a latex, such as an acrylics or styrene butadiene latex or natural rubber based binder, especially containing a film former and/or an anti-foaming agent. The term film former
25 means a material capable of forming a film when dry at ambient temperature and pressure. Suitable film-formers include polyvinyl alcohol or polyvinyl alcohol/vinyl acetate copolymers, and quaternary ammonium salts of polyvinylpyrrolidone/vinyl acetate copolymers.

30 Suitably impregnation of the sheet material with the odour-absorbing material is carried out using an odour-absorbing material-containing liquid preferably also

comprising a fixing agent, by any one or more of the following methods:

5 saturation by soaking in a convenient manner e.g. simply delivery of the appropriate chemical treatment liquor from a hose over the sheet material;

10 impregnation by immersion of the sheet material in a bath of the treatment liquor;

forced impregnation into the sheet material by application of the liquor under pressure;

15 pouring of the treatment liquor over the sheet material by a curtain-coating device situated over a progressively advancing web of sheet material to drench the sheet material;

20 spraying the treatment liquor upon the fibrous material;

or an equivalent treatment of a web or mat of the sheet material.

25 Suitably the fixing agent comprises at least 5%(w/w) of the total weight of the sheet material, preferably at least 10%(w/w), more preferably at least 15%(w/w) yet more preferably at least 20%(w/w) and most preferably at least 25%(w/w).

30 Suitably the fixing agent comprises up to 60%(w/w) of the total weight of the sheet material, preferably up to 50%(w/w), more preferably up to 45%(w/w), and most preferably up to 40%(w/w).

The sheet material and/or odour-absorbing agent may be as described in WO 98/303026.

- 5 Suitably the opening is sufficiently large to pass a large item of clothing, such as a jacket, without folding it. Preferably the opening is at least 40 cm, more preferably at least 50 cm in length.
- 10 The opening in the surface of the enclosure may comprise an elongate slit formed in the surface.

Suitably the slit extends, in one direction at least, to the peripheral edge of the surface, and may extend to the
15 periphery of the surface at both ends, thus dividing the surface; preferably bisecting the surface. Alternatively the slit may stop short of one or both of the peripheral edges.

- 20 The opening may comprise a cover portion, arranged, in use, to conceal the opening but allow access to the opening.

When the opening is an elongate slit the cover portion may
25 comprise a flap of sheet material connected at one side of the slit and extending across the slit. The cover member is preferably substantially equal in length to the slit. The cover member may comprise releasable fastening means to fasten the cover member across the opening, until such
30 time in use when it is desired to access the opening. The fastening means may comprise press studs, buttons, micro hooks/eyes (eg trade mark VELCRO) or adhesive (including low tack adhesive, and including single or double layer -

ie adhesive-to-sheet material or adhesive-to-adhesive). Other fastening means may be employed. When the opening is an elongate slit, suitably one edge of the slit overlaps the other edge of the slit to form an integral
5 cover member over the slit. The fastening means is then suitably beneath the cover member.

Alternatively the opening may include a slide fastener, for example an interlocking teeth (zip) fastener.

10

Suitably the opening of the sheet material is formed in the front and/or rear surface, preferably in the front surface.

15 The front and rear surfaces may be integrally formed from the same sheet material, folded about a fold line, or fold lines, to form the surfaces, and connected together as required to form the enclosure. In a convenient arrangement having a slit which extends from the top to
20 the bottom of the front surface, and the front surface is this divided into two panels or lapels, a single sheet may be cut and the panels and lapels formed by folding them against the rear surface.

25 Alternatively the front and rear surfaces are separate surfaces, connected together to form the enclosure.

Preferably the front and rear together define a slim enclosure in which the front and rear surfaces bear
30 against an item of clothing within the enclosure.

Where the front and rear surfaces are connected together (as distinct from being co-formed) they may be heat

sealed, stitched, stapled, glued, pinned or woven together, for example.

Suitably such front and rear surfaces are connected
5 together about at least a portion of the periphery thereof to form the enclosure.

Preferably there is at least one portion of the peripheral
edge of the front and rear surfaces at which they are
10 neither co-formed and folded, nor connected, thus forming a peripheral opening, at the peripheral edge.

There may be provided an uppermost peripheral opening dimensioned to allow the hook of a clothes hanger to be
15 inserted through this peripheral opening in use. Whilst the peripheral opening is dimensioned to allow a large hook to be inserted through it, it is preferably smaller than head-sized. Thus, suitably the enclosure has no usable head hole.

20

Alternatively or additionally there may be provided a lowermost peripheral opening such that, in use, an item of clothing placed into the enclosure defined between the front and rear surfaces, may protrude through this
25 peripheral opening. Suitably the opening in the surface of the sheet material extends directly from the lowermost peripheral opening, thus forming a pair of flaps in the surface which can be drawn back by user to insert an item of clothing into the enclosure.

30

Suitably the front and rear surfaces have a peripheral shape generally corresponding to the outline of an item of clothing to be covered by the clothes cover. Preferably

the front and rear surfaces generally conform in shape to the peripheral shape of a jacket, coat, shirt or jumper. Preferably, however, the front and rear surfaces do not include sleeve shaped portions.

5

Preferably the cover is of similar size to, or preferably somewhat larger than, a jacket or jumper. Suitably it is at least 40 cm, preferably at least 50 cm, and most preferably at least 60 cm wide (at its maximum). Suitably
10 it is at least 40 cm, preferably at least 60 cm, more preferably at least 70 cm, and most preferably at least 80 cm long (at its maximum).

Preferably the cover is not itself a garment or item of
15 clothing.

According to a second aspect of the invention there is provided a method of removing an odour from an item of clothing, the method comprising:

- 20 (a) providing an odour-absorbing clothes cover of the first aspect of the invention; and
(b) inserting an item of clothing through the opening of the sheet material, into the enclosure.

25 When a peripheral opening suitable for a hook is present, the method may comprise placing the item of clothing on a clothes hanger before step (b), and inserting the hook of the clothes hanger through the uppermost peripheral opening, when present, to protrude outside of the cover.
30 Thus the cover, enclosing the item of clothing may then be hung on a suitable item, such as a rail in a wardrobe.

Before or after use the cover may be stored in an outer packaging cover. The outer packaging cover may be constructed from a resealable plastics material, for example, and may be constructed to prevent odours, moisture or dust in the air from being absorbed by the odour-absorbing material of the clothes cover, prior to its use, or between uses.

In order to better understand the various aspects of the invention and to show how embodiments of the same may be put into effect, the invention will now be described by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a front view of a first embodiment of an odour-absorbing clothes cover of the invention;

Figure 2 is a rear view of the embodiment shown in Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a view corresponding to that of Figure 1, with the opening thereinto partially exposed;

Figure 4 is a view of the first embodiment shown in Figure 1, into which a jacket has been partly inserted into the enclosure through an opening in the front surface of the cover;

Figure 5 is a view corresponding to that of Figure 4, but with the jacket fully inserted within the enclosure; and

Figure 6 is a front view of a second embodiment of an odour-absorbing item of the invention.

We refer firstly to Figures 1 to 5. An odour-absorbing clothes cover 2 comprises a sheet material 4 formed from connected front 6 and rear 8 surfaces. The front 6 and rear 8 surfaces are produced by folding a single sheet about two fold lines, which ultimately are the peripheral side edges of the cover. The peripheral edges are stitched together only at the shoulders. The result is a slim enclosure into which an item of clothing can be placed. An opening 10 is formed in the front surface 4, in the form of an elongate slit extending from the top of the front surface down to the lowermost peripheral edge thereof, and bisecting the front surface. The opening is overlapped by a covering flap 12. Beneath the covering flap 12 there is a single hook and loop (VELCRO trade mark) fastener (not shown) about half way up the covering flap.

The cover has an uppermost, short peripheral opening 14 cut from the junction between the front 6 and rear 8 surfaces at the upper edge of the sheet material 4, and a lowermost, long, peripheral opening 16. The lowermost edge 20 of the front surface is not connected to the lowermost edge 21 of the rear surface. Accordingly the lowermost opening 16 extends across the entire width of the cover.

The opening 10 bisects the uppermost opening 14 and also bisects the lowermost opening 16. Thus, the opening 10 forms a curtain-like pair of flaps 18 and 20 in the front surface 6, which may be drawn aside (see Figures 3 and 4). This embodiment is useful for items of clothing which are relatively long, such as coats, dresses and jackets, which

may be inserted into the opening 10 by pulling back the flaps 18 and 20 and pushing the item of clothing into the enclosure through the opening 10. The lowermost end of the item can protrude through the lowermost opening 16
5 thus preventing the item from becoming creased or crumpled whilst in the cover 2.

The clothes cover is 85 cm long and 65 cm wide (maximum length and width).

10

The uppermost peripheral opening 14 is sufficiently large to take the hook of a clothes hanger, but not so large that the cover does not cover the shoulders of an appropriate item of clothing - for example a jacket,
15 jumper or shirt - inside the enclosure. Typically it is about 8-15 cm in width

The sheet material is constructed from polyester fibres having a length of 30-50mm formed into sheet material
20 comprising a fibrous web, using the carding process of GB-A-2151667 and impregnated with a carbon-based odour-absorbing material, such as charcoal.

The sheet material is impregnated with activated charcoal
25 by a process of immersing the sheet in a bath of treatment liquor in which activated charcoal is present. The treatment liquor, based on the dry weight under ambient temperature and pressure, comprises 25%(w/w) of an acrylic butadiene binder, 2%(w/w) of a polyvinyl alcohol film
30 former, together forming a fixing agent, and an anti-foaming agent in a suitable organic carrier medium. The bulk of the liquor is made up of the particulate charcoal. During immersion of the sheet the charcoal is taken up

into the fibrous web and held in place by the fixing agent to prevent future shedding. The sheet is then cut into appropriate shaped sheets in order to form enclosures. Activated charcoal constitutes 35%(w/w) of the finished sheet material. Fixing agent constitutes about 35%(w/w) of the finished sheet material.

In use, an item of clothing, in the form of a jacket 22, for example, is inserted into the enclosure formed by the connected front 6 and rear 8 surfaces by lifting the covering flap 12 of the opening 10 and inserting the jacket into the enclosure through the opening 10. If the jacket is mounted on a clothes hanger 24, as shown in Figure 4, the clothes hanger is also inserted through the opening 10 and the hook 26 of the clothes hanger pushed through the uppermost peripheral opening 14. Thus when the jacket 22 is fully inserted into the cover 2 the hook 26 protrudes from the uppermost peripheral opening 14 and the cover 2 and jacket 22 can be hung on a clothes rail, for example. It will be seen that in this embodiment the jacket hangs below the lowermost edge of the enclosure at 28, this edge being left unsewn to leave the opening 16.

We refer now to Figure 6 which illustrates an alternative embodiment of odour-absorbing clothes cover 2 of the invention. The cover 2 is similar to the cover 2 of the embodiment shown in Figures 1 to 5. Like components are represented by like numerals. An opening 10 of this embodiment extends from near the uppermost edge of the front surface 6 down to near the lowermost edge 30 of the front surface 6, but does not intersect either edge. Except for an uppermost opening 14 for a hanger hook the entire periphery, including the side edges and lowermost

edge 30, is sewn, the front and rear surfaces having been formed as separate pieces of matching outline. Nevertheless, clothes can easily be inserted into the enclosure and are then very well enveloped by it.

5

In alternative embodiments the cover 2 may include a separate outer packaging cover (not shown) made from a impermeable plastics material, for example, and having a resealable opening. The packaging cover can protect the cover 2 and enclosed item from moisture, odours or dust in the atmosphere, at the point of sale and/or between uses. This can have the effect of prolonging the life-time of the odour-absorbing material in the cover 2 by preventing unnecessary odour-absorption or other absorption from the atmosphere, which may otherwise saturate the odour-absorbing material prematurely.

10

15

Claims

1. An odour-absorbing clothes cover comprising an odour-absorbing sheet material, the sheet material defining an enclosure arranged, in use, to receive an item of clothing, the enclosure comprising an opening formed in a surface of the enclosure, for passage of the item of clothing.
2. A clothes cover as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the sheet material is a non-woven fibrous sheet material.
3. A clothes cover as claimed in Claim 1 or 2, wherein the sheet material is an air permeable sheet material.
4. A clothes cover as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the sheet material is selected from a polyester, a polyamide, a polyvinyl alcohol, cellulose, nylon, and mixtures thereof.
5. A clothes cover as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the odour absorbing materials is selected from activated carbon, a zeolite, titanium dioxide, zinc oxide, aluminium, and mixtures thereof.
6. A clothes cover as claimed in Claim 5, wherein the odour absorbing material is particulate activated carbon.
7. A clothes cover as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the odour-absorbing material is present in the sheet material in an amount of at least 5%(w/w),

preferably at least 30%(w/w), of the total weight of the sheet material.

- 5 8. A clothes cover as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the odour-absorbing material is present in the sheet material in an amount of no more than 60%(w/w) of the total weight of the sheet material, preferably no more than 40%(w/w).
- 10 9. A clothes cover as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the odour-absorbing material comprises a fixing agent arranged to inhibit or substantially avoid shedding of the odour-absorbing material from the sheet material.
- 15 10. A clothes cover as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the opening in the surface of the enclosure comprises an elongate slit formed in the surface.
- 20 11. A clothes cover as claimed in Claim 10, wherein the slit extends in one direction at least in the region of the peripheral edge of the surface.
- 25 12. A clothes cover as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the opening comprises a cover member, arranged, in use, to close the opening intermittently.
- 30 13. A clothes cover as claimed in Claim 12, wherein the opening is an elongate slit, and the cover member comprises a flap of sheet material connected at one side of the slit and extending across the slit, being securable at that position but releasable therefrom.

14. A clothes cover as claimed in any preceding claim,
wherein the sheet material comprises front and rear
surfaces which are connected or folded together to
define the enclosure.
- 5
15. A clothes cover as claimed in Claim 16, wherein the
clothes cover comprised an uppermost peripheral
opening, dimensioned to allow the hook of a clothes
hanger to be inserted through it, in use.
- 10
16. A clothes cover as claimed in any preceding claim,
wherein the lowermost peripheral edges of the front
and rear surfaces are not connected such that, in use,
an item of clothing placed into the enclosure defined
15 between the front and rear surfaces, may protrude
through the lowermost peripheral opening thereby
provided.
- 20
17. A clothes cover as claimed in Claim 16, wherein the
opening in the surface of the sheet material extends
directly from the lowermost peripheral opening, thus
forming a pair of flaps in the front surface, which
flaps may be drawn back by user to insert an item of
clothing into the enclosure.
- 25
18. A method of removing an odour from an item of
clothing, the method comprising:
- 30
- (a) providing an odour-absorbing clothes cover as
claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 17; and
 - (b) inserting an item of clothing through the opening
of the sheet material, into the enclosure.

19. A clothes cover substantially as described herein with reference to the accompanying drawings.
20. A method substantially described herein with reference
5 to the accompanying drawings.

ODOUR ABSORBING ARTICLESABSTRACT

5 The invention provides an odour-absorbing clothes cover
(2) comprising a sheet material (4) comprising an odour-
absorbing material, the sheet material defining an
enclosure, arranged, in use, to receive an item of
clothing (18), the enclosure comprising an opening formed
10 in a surface of the enclosure. The invention also extends
to a method of removing or mitigating odours from an item
of clothing.

Fig. 4

15

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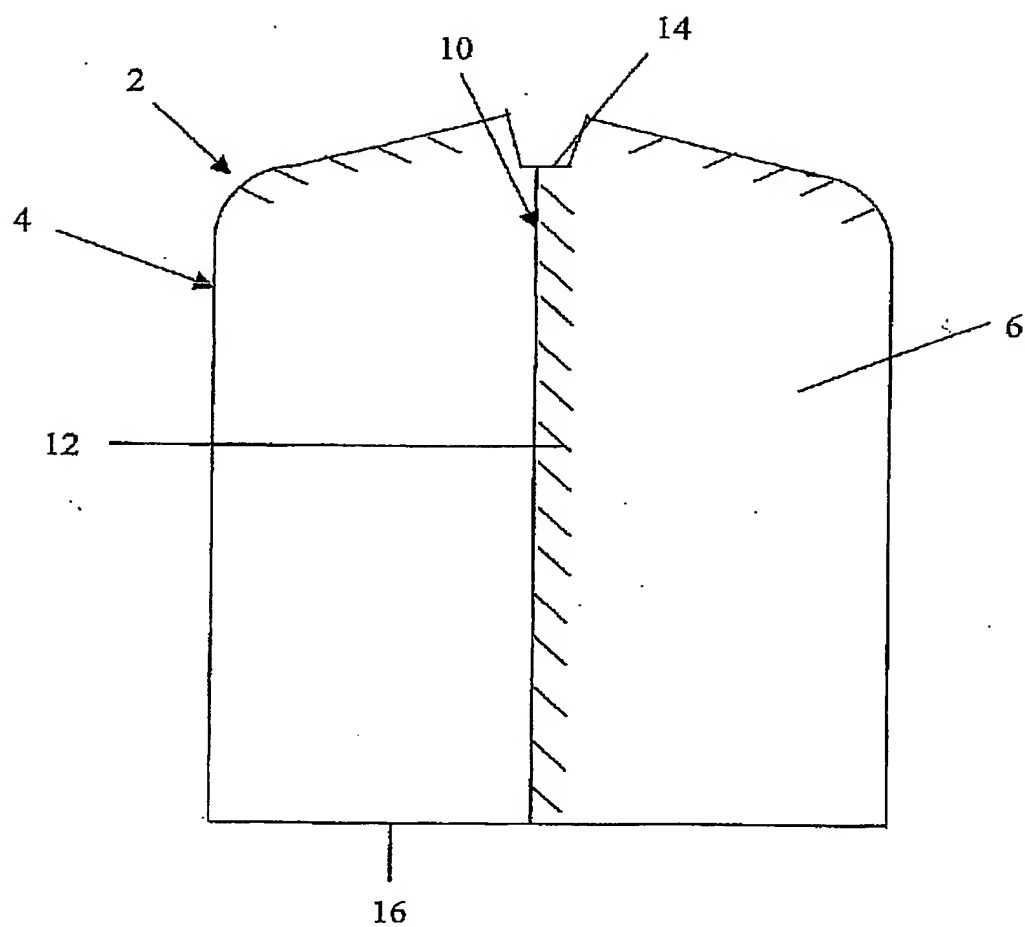


FIG. 1

2/6

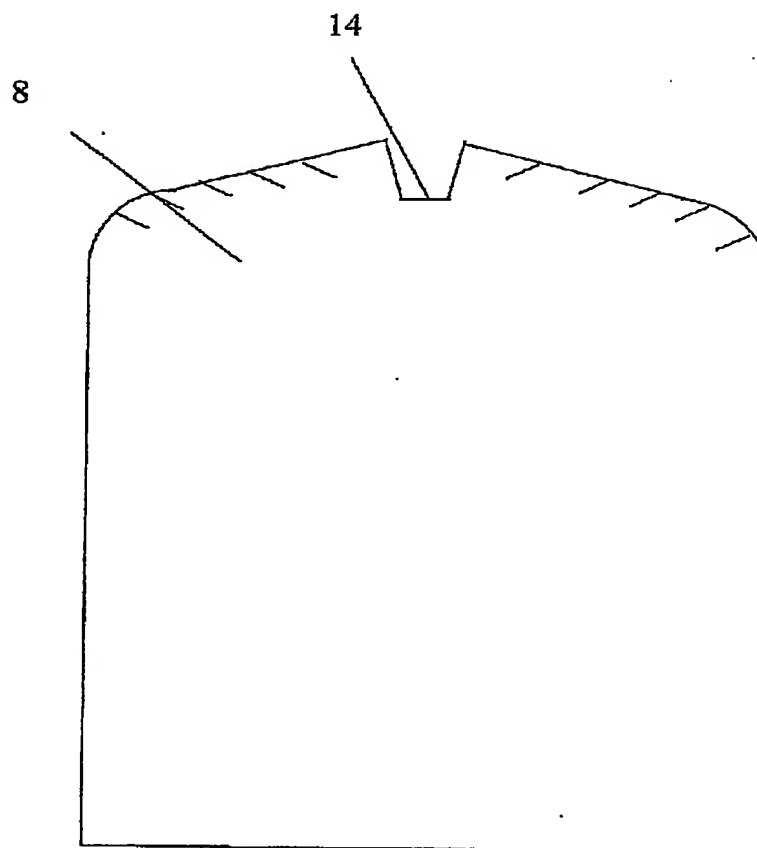


FIG. 2

3/6

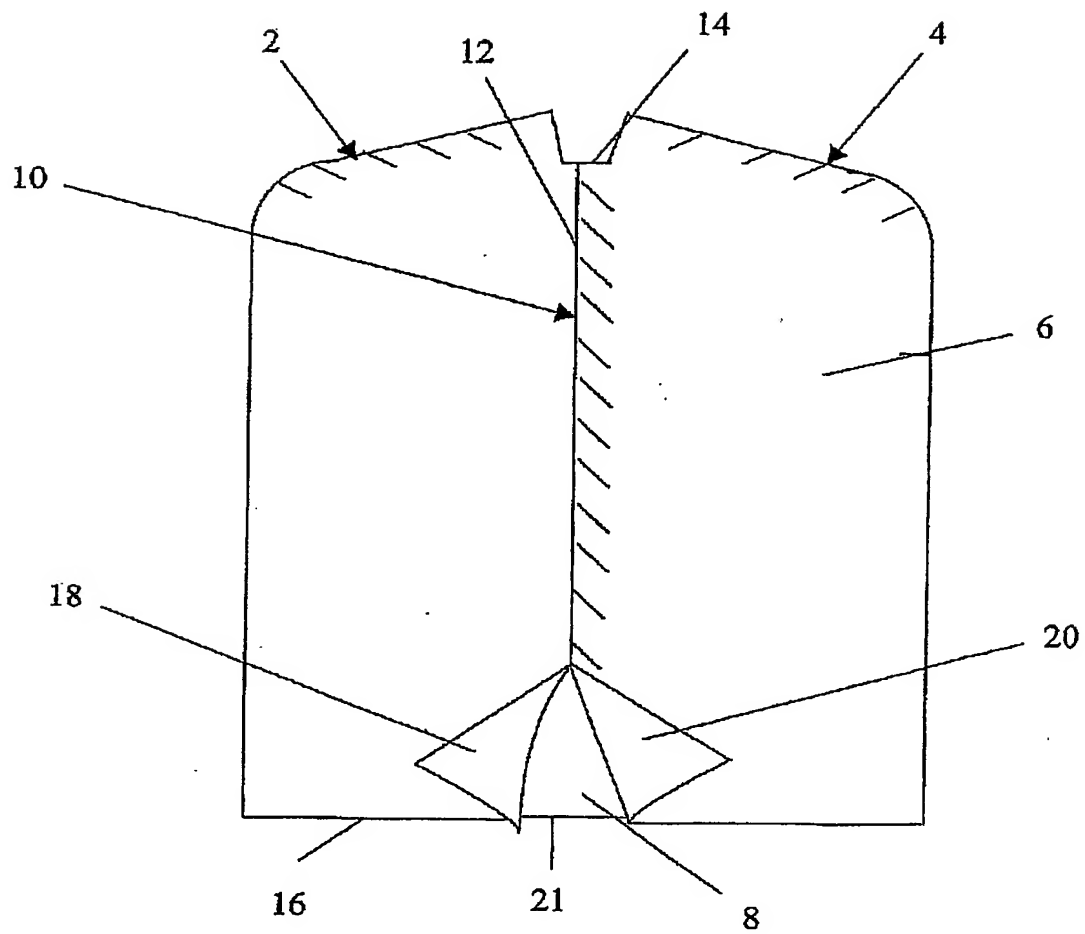


FIG. 3

4/6

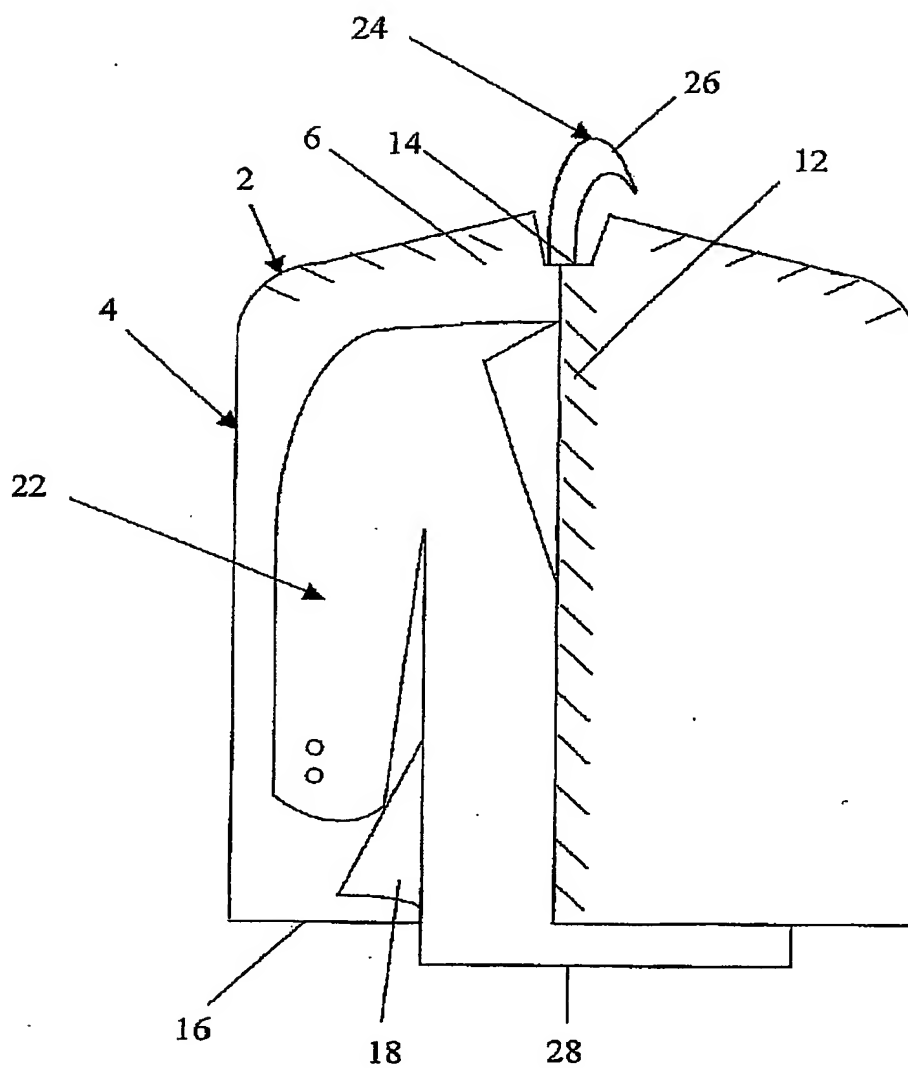


FIG. 4

5/6

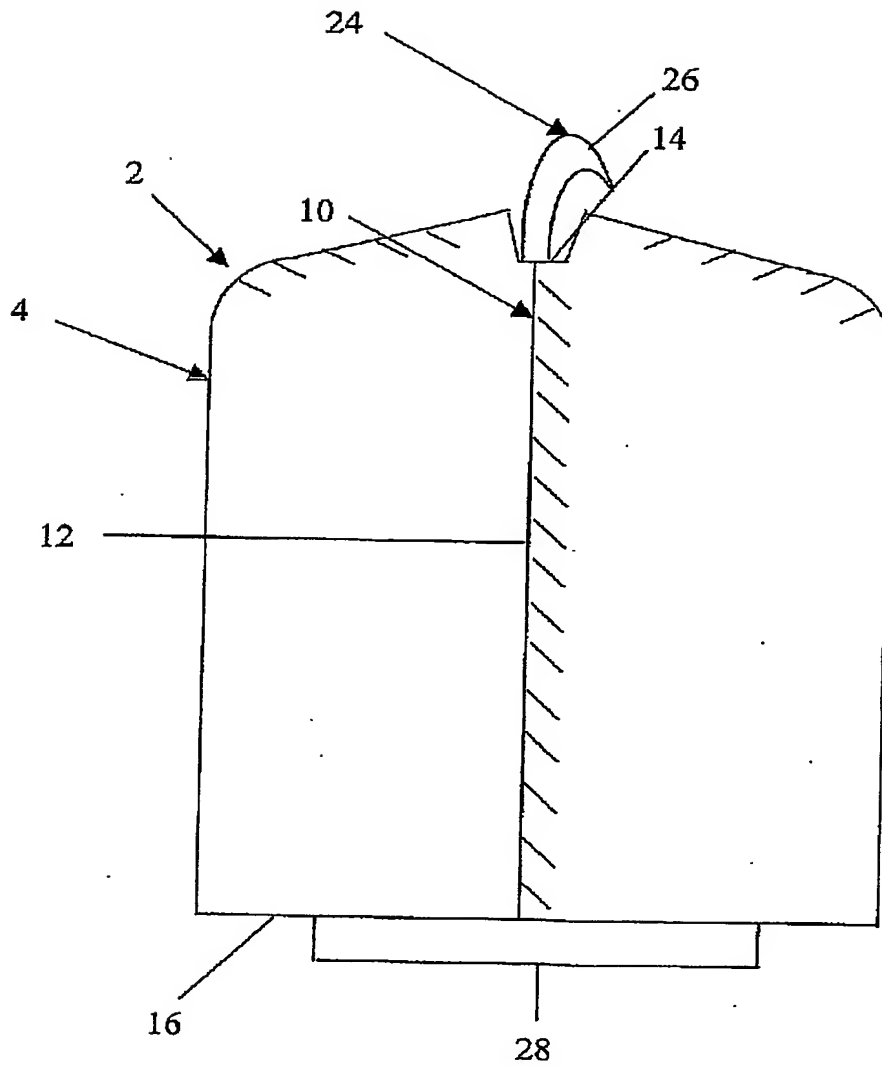


FIG. 5

6/6

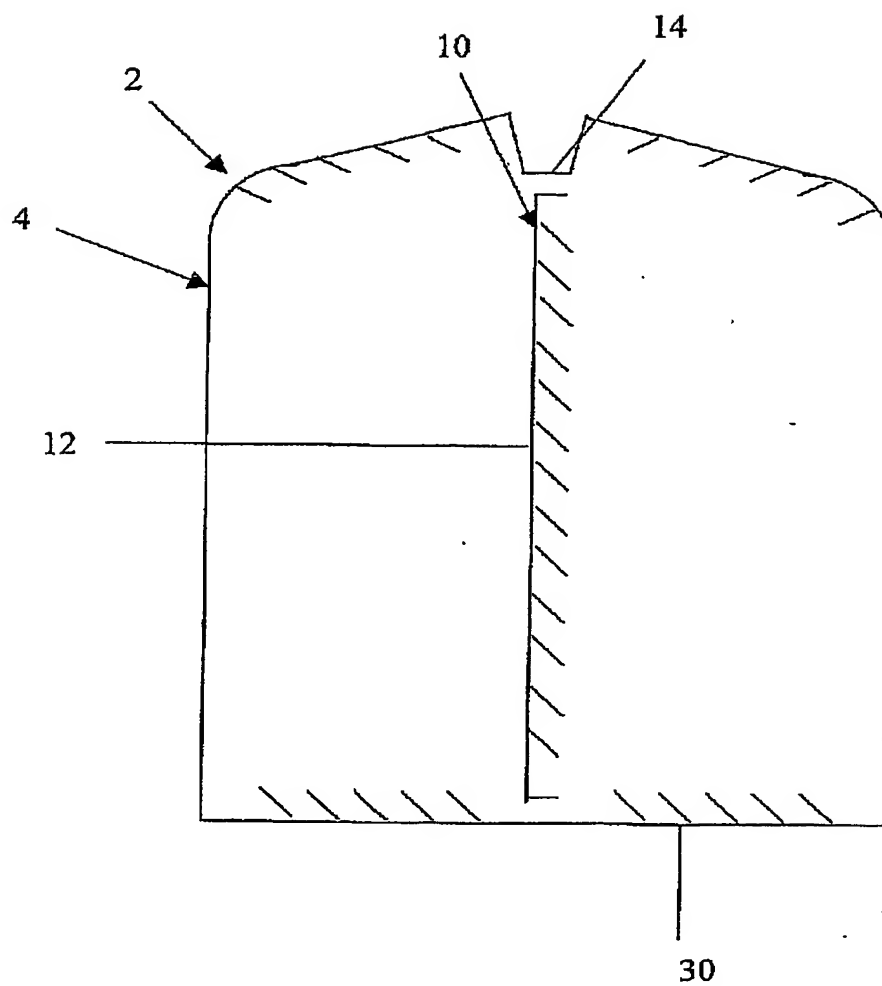


FIG. 6

PCT Application

GB0304025



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